



Tennessee
Department of Children's Services

Strategic Plan

2008-2013

Vision

Leading the way for safety and permanency in the lives of children and families by championing excellence in service.

Mission

Our mission is to empower families and support community safety and partnerships to help ensure safety, permanency and well-being for children.

Values and Definitions

Integrity - The Department values honor, respect, trustworthiness and principled action.

Commitment to Excellence - The Department expects peak performance from all levels of staff, every day, in every degree.

Diversity - The Department respects, celebrates and seeks to maintain the integrity of all cultures.

People - The Department values all people, promoting partnerships between staff, families and community partners in order to create a comprehensive network of services.

Family-Focused - The Department takes a strengths-based service approach, coordinating with family members as well as professionals and others to form an all-inclusive team promoting stability and permanence for children.

Community Partnerships - The Department actively engages community stakeholders.

Safety - The Department makes every effort to ensure the safety of children, families, staff and the community.

Employees - The Department strives to create a work environment that allows for personal and professional growth, affording each employee a high quality of life. The Department will also respect and promote each staff member's personal family interests recognizing that we must have the opportunity for safety and stability in our own lives before we can adequately and appropriately serve others.

I. Safety and Prevention

Goal

DCS will provide prevention and early intervention services to reduce the risk of child abuse, neglect, and the occurrence of unruly and delinquent behaviors.

Indicators

Indicator A: Decrease the number of children entering out-of-home care.

Indicator B: Increase participation in Relative Caregiver programs and services.

Indicator C: Decrease the number of children re-entering out-of-home care.

Indicator D: Reduce the recurrence of child abuse and neglect.

Indicator E: Increase the utilization of funds available for prevention and intervention services.

Indicator F: Increase the number of initial relative placements.

Indicator G: Increase the number of referrals for appropriate intervention services to reduce juvenile offenses.

Indicator H: Improve priority response times to initial referrals.

Indicator I: Increase the percentage of CPS case investigations closed in 60 days.

II. Uniform Practices

Goal

DCS will implement standard principles of effective, family-focused case work and service delivery.

Indicators

Indicator A: Standardization and utilization of required forms.

Indicator B: Council on Accreditation approves and accredits DCS.

Indicator C: Improve practice indicators as measured by regional Quality Service Review.

Indicator D: Increase the number of performance-based contractors who meet the Chapin Hall threshold.

Indicator E: Maintain the percentage of children receiving timely EPSD&T well child screenings.

- Indicator F: Increase the number of children receiving timely follow-ups.
- Indicator G: Increase the number of training opportunities for DCS staff in principles of best practice and the QSR process.
- Indicator H: Increase the number of youth who receive appropriate interdependent living services.
- Indicator I: Increase the number of permanency plans completed and ratified in 30 days.

III. Effective Communication

Goal

DCS will establish and promote effective communication practices which will improve outcomes for children and families.

Indicators

- Indicator A: Develop and implement a communication plan.
- Indicator B: Utilization of internal and external satisfaction surveys for staff, families, stakeholders and community partners.
- Indicator C: Increase consumer satisfaction with received services.
- Indicator D: Increase the number of mandated representatives who participate in Community Advisory Boards.
- Indicator E: Utilization of Child and Family Team Survey data to improve CFTMs.
- Indicator F: Implementation of new SACWIS system.
- Indicator G: Maintain availability of current Weekly Wrap-Up and regional newsletters on the intranet and on the state government website.

IV. Community Collaboration

Goal

DCS will increase community collaboration with an array of public and private organizations and develop a coordinated network of partnerships which supports children and families.

Indicators

- Indicator A: Create a tracking mechanism to measure DCS involvement in community meetings, boards, councils, forums, and committees.

- Indicator B: The implementation of M.R.S. will increase the number of referrals for support services to keep families intact.
- Indicator C: Continued coordination of monthly cross functional meetings.
- Indicator D: Collaborate with Stakeholders to provide culturally responsive services.
- Indicator E: Improve collaboration with the court system.
- Indicator F: Create and maintain regional resource linkage directories.

V. Cultural Responsiveness

Goal

DCS will maintain a respectful and culturally responsive environment and delivery of service to all children and families.

Indicators

- Indicator A: Increase recruitment efforts for resource families from faith based community and diverse populations.
- Indicator B: Conduct statewide training in ethics and issues related to cultural competency annually.
- Indicator C: Increase the number of resources which provide multi/bilingual services, as needed.
- Indicator D: Increase the number of pertinent documents converted to Spanish and other languages, as needed.
- Indicator E: Increase the delivery of culturally responsive services to diverse populations.

VI. Recruit, Retain, and Develop a Quality Workforce

Goal

DCS will develop a quality workforce that embraces the principles of best practice in speech, conduct, and service delivery.

Indicators

- Indicator A: Implement a recognition and reward program for exemplary work.
- Indicator B: Increase efforts to retain qualified employees.
- Indicator C: Increase employee satisfaction as measured by employee satisfaction surveys.

- Indicator D: Increase opportunities for training, staff development and growth.
- Indicator E: Improve the quality of meetings with supervisors and staff to promote and support best practice.
- Indicator F: Improve the appropriate assignment of cases to family service workers by supervisors.
- Indicator G: Increase the number of staff with master's degrees.
- Indicator H: Increase the number of acceptable ratings on QSR practice wheel indicators.
- Indicator I: Increase the number of interns who become DCS employees.
- Indicator J: Increase ongoing training on safety issues in working with children and families.

VII. Promote Permanency and Stability

Goal

DCS will promote permanency by helping children achieve safe, stable, least restrictive, and most appropriate placements.

Indicators

- Indicator A: Increase the number and percent of children exiting custody to permanency.
- Indicator B: Increase the placement stability for children in out-of-home care.
- Indicator C: Maintain continuity of care for children in custody by reducing the number of family service workers assigned for the life of cases.
- Indicator D: Decrease the average length of stay in custody for children.
- Indicator E: Increase the number of timely diligent searches for relatives and significant relationships to locate appropriate placements for children.
- Indicator F: Increase and maintain family connections.
- Indicator G: Decrease the number and percent of children re-entering out of home care.
- Indicator H: Increase in percent of resource home availability, including kinship homes.